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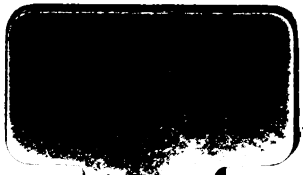
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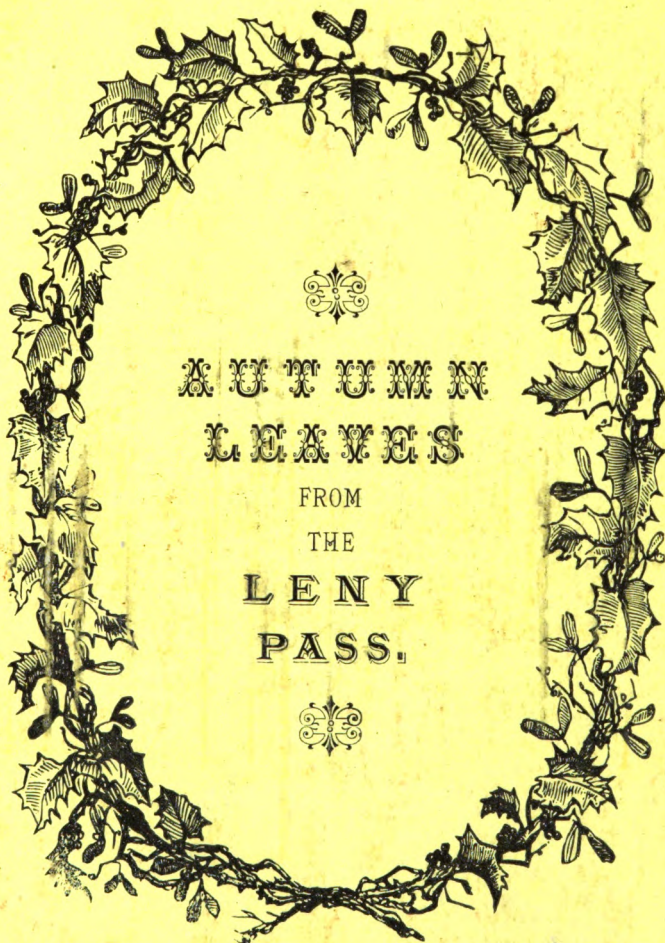
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AUTUMN
LEAVES

FROM
THE
LENY
PASS.

❧

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AUTUMN LEAVES

FROM THE

LENY PASS.



AUTUMN LEAVES

FROM THE

LENY PASS.

BY

ROSA MACKENZIE KETTLE,

AUTHOR OF 'THE FALLS OF THE LODGE,' 'MY HOME IN THE SHIRES,'
'SMUGGLERS AND FORESTERS,' ETC., ETC., ETC.



' At eventide there shall be light,'
I heard a soft voice say ;
And radiance, ruddy, warm and bright
Upon the wood-paths lay ;
As though each glittering fragile leaf,
Hanging from bough and spray,
Had caught upon its shining sheaf
Beams of the dying day.

Beyond our belts of dark pine-wood
The stormy winds sweep by ;
Wide, cold, and deep outspreads the flood,
Beneath a lowering sky ;
But sunshine rests upon the leaves,
A sunshine of their own,
Like the last rays the Sun-God weaves
Ere he lays by his crown.



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1882.

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THE PASS OF LENY.

FOUR MILES WITHIN THE HIGHLAND LINE.

THEIR course lay along the banks of a lake, whose deep waters reflected the crimson beams of the western sun. The broken path was in some places shaded by ancient birches and oak trees, and in others overhung by fragments of huge rock. Elsewhere, the hill, which formed the northern side of this beautiful sheet of water, arose in steep but less precipitous acclivity, and was arrayed in heath of the darkest purple. In the present times, a scene so romantic would possess the highest charms for the traveller, but those who journey in days of doubt and dread pay little attention to picturesque scenery.—*A Legend of Montrose.*

THE beautiful Pass of Leny, near Callander, in Menteith, leading from the Lowlands of Perthshire to the Highlands, Sir Walter Scott informs us, 'in some respects answers this description,' but not in all. Is not this the case with most of his vivid pictures of nature? Whilst every epithet graphically represents hill, vale, and glen, have not places which he has immortalised a yet finer charm

from the idealism he has thrown over them? Is not 'Glenartney's hazel shade' deeper, the 'red beacon on Benvoirlich's head' brighter? Are not the wild heights of Uam Var sterner, the Brigg of Turk where 'the headmost horseman rode alone,' and the 'deepest den' of the Trossachs where Fitz-James heard the death-sob of his gallant grey, more sad and solitary, and silvery Vennachar yet more lovely, when seen through the halo of his genius?

Nowhere can more picturesque variety be found than in those parts of a mountainous country where the heights descend into the plain, as in the district where the Leny and Vennachar waters meet and form the rapidly flowing Teith, just above Callander Bridge. It is true that the buildings connected with the Glasgow Waterworks have somewhat marred and altered the surrounding scenery at the spot where the duel was fought between Fitz-James and Rhoderick Dhu, when the latter had guided his foe faithfully,

'Till past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard,
' As far as Coilantogle's ford.'

But though, contrary to the disguised monarch's anticipations, the rock *has* been hurled or split from its solid foundations, and no longer overhangs the Pass where

'Stern and steep
The hill sinks down upon the deep,
* * . * *
Here Vennachar in silver flows,
There ridge on ridge Ben-Ledi rose,'

may still be said. 'On Ben-Ledi's living side,' imagination, wakened by the bard, almost expects to see the rushes and willow-wands bristle into

active life, or suddenly silenced and stilled and stiffened on the lonely heath and bracken-covered side of the hill, 'Clan-Alpine's warriors true' lurking behind the cold grey stones and waving broom, vanish at their chief's stern command. Past the graceful, high-arched bridge, under the whispering boughs, the river still rushes on, through the Calhallem Woods, so loved by the Queen when she was staying at Invertrossachs House; with the wild, deep-red roses peculiar to Scotland twining amongst the trees, and blue-bells nodding on the banks. Ben-Ledi lifts her graceful curves above the brown and purple crags of Dunmore and Craignacoheily, and 'Ben-Aan rears high his forehead bare,' to meet storm and sunshine. Farther on the chain of lakes—of which Vennachar forms the first silver link; Achray, white and gleaming like an opal, the second; and sapphire-coloured Loch Katrine, the third—takes you into the very bosom of the mountains,

'That like giants stand,
To sentinel enchanted land.'

Even whilst pursuing safely the road now cut in the rocky wall which girds these matchless waters, a shudder thrills through you as you look down into pathless depths of green shrub, grey morass, and dark boulders, where silvery birches weep over rock and stone and rivulet, and but a few inches intervene between the narrow road and the precipice.

Under lofty crags, tree-crowned, the irregular street of houses and cottages of Callander bask in picturesque confusion on either side of the still often 'flooded Teith.' Here are country-seats and

villas, called 'The Leny Feus,' Manses and an Episcopal Church and Vicarage, fields and gardens; past and among which, and under several bridges, rush foamingly along, or sleep in sunny, tranquil reaches, the Vennachar and Leny waters, and the wider stream of the Teith, hastening to form its junction with the Forth near Stirling, whose castled hill is faintly visible on the horizon.

Cambusmore, where Sir Walter often visited, and Drumvich, the village where the half-crazy blacksmith's wife mistook Waverley for the young Chevalier, are within an easy walk of Callander. Above, the Bracklinn Falls tear down through the woods; a narrow bridge, the one to which Waverley is described as looking upward with a shudder when he saw Flora and her attendant Kathleen carelessly crossing it, now more safely guarded, spans the torrent. The Castle-towers of Doune where Charles Edward held his court, and where Waverley was taken as a prisoner by the Highland outlaw, Donald Bean Lean, shorn of their brief grandeur, still wear the picturesque aspect which time throws over all storied ruins, like the high double-arched window and aisle of the old Priory of Dunblane, not many miles distant, where, undistinguished under the pavement of the renovated choir, rest the two fair Drummond sisters, Margaret and Sybella, blasted by the poisonous breath of jealousy, because the favour of a monarch had shone upon their fragile, flower-like beauty.

Though in the course of time many changes have passed over the scenes visited by Scott in his ardent youth—where he is said to have written 'The Lady

of the Lake,' and parts of his most stirring romances—they still retain their characteristic features, although trains rush through Highland gorges, and steamers pass 'Ellen's Isle,' and the wooded banks of Loch Katrine and Loch Lomond. Ben Lomond, like some wide-shouldered giant, rests upon the shore, calmly surveying the pleasure-boats and puffs of smoke at the lower end of his lake, the suspension-bridge spanning the Leven, and the swarms of wandering tourists from many lands. Storms rush down and sweep over the water from Glen Luss and Glen Falloch—now pitchy dark, then lurid red as the sun sends his last gleam over the troubled waters. Higher up the lake stern mountain-sides sink sheer down into the water, goats perch on the crags above Rob Roy's Cavern, and Nature, as the seasons advance, changes her wild garniture from the snowy wreaths and clusters of hawthorn, to the wild roses and blue-bells of summer, and the heather and berries and glorious colouring of autumn. All her lavish beauties are doubled by the magical loveliness of the reflections, more vivid than reality, of each rocky island, each silver strand, and the ancient majestic trees that crown the banks and shelving greensward of Ross-Dhu.

How wonderfully beautiful are the reflections in Loch Lomond! They seem to be set deep down in the water, and the breezes which ruffle the surface of the lake, and feel sharp and chilly on the deck of a passing vessel, do not disturb them. Though not a rival of Scott—the true poet of the Highland Lakes—a few stanzas, dedicated to the mistress of

one of those beautiful homes which adorn the shores of this exquisite piece of water, may be tolerated for the sake of the scenes they recall, which *cannot* in prose be fully represented.



SHADOW AND REFLECTION.



CROSS Loch Lomond's changeful face
 Swiftly the shadows fly;
 But underneath that sunlit space
 Faithful reflections lie,
 Unruffled by the winds that sweep
 Over the waters blue and deep.

Thy Castle Towers—thy mountain's brow—
 The woods that fringe thy heights—
 Repeated 'neath the waters glow,
 Tinged with yet mellow lights;
 Even as our hearts give back the spell
 Of joys remembered long and well.

Across the hills I've wandered far,
 Past many a tarn and glen;
 I've seen where silvery Vennachar
 Sends forth the Teith again;
 And Leny Waters brightly stray
 O'er their dark bed in foaming play.

Ben-Ledi lifts her graceful crown
Against a stormy sky—
On heathery ridges looking down,
Where purple shadows lie ;
While through the plain, in branching stream,
Glad Teith's white waters glance and gleam.

But not where Lubnaig's waters rest
Beneath Ben Voirlich's head—
Not on her land-locked slumbering breast,
Are such reflections spread,
As where thy waters lave the beach
To which Ben Lomond's shadows reach.

Those narrow strips of silvery sand,
The woods that crown the steep,
Thicket and isle on either hand,
As though in magic sleep,
Reflected rest, while through the tide,
With slackened sail, we smoothly glide.

'Twas there the spell was o'er me cast,
From green Duncruin's hill—
Where, in dim legends of the past,
The witches worked their will ;
And I must love that Highland lake,
And Balloch Towers for thy dear sake.





THE AULD HOUSE OF GASK, IN STRATHEARN.

'FAREWELL, Edinburgh, your hospitals and ha's—
The rich man's friend, the Cross lang kenned, and ports and city
wa's,
The kirks that grace this honoured place now peacefu' as they stand,
Where'er they're found on Scottish ground, the bulwarks of the land.
Farewell, Edinburgh, and a' your daughters fair,
Your palace in the sheltered glen, your Castle in the air,
Your rocky brows, your grassy knows, and eke your mountains
bald;
Were I to tell your beauties a' my tale would ne'er be tauld.'
The Baroness Nairne.

THUS sang one of the sweetest of the many
sweet songstresses of Scotland, when leav-
ing that queen of cities, which can never
be quitted without regret, to return to the
home of her childhood in Strathearn. There are
now two mansions at Gask; and, in the grounds of
the Hall, the remains of a third are still lovingly
and faithfully preserved. It is true the walls of
'The Auld House' are now a mere screen, mantled
with ivy, on one side of the flower-garden. Only
open spaces show the shape of the doors whence

issued the 'bairnies fu' o' glee;' or the windows from which the 'auld laird' and his 'genty leddy,' who, at the risk of land and gear, sheltered Scotland's fugitive heir, overlooked their play.

'Oh, the auld house, the auld house,
What tho' the rooms were wee,
Oh, kind hearts were dwelling there,
And bairnies fu' o' glee;
The wild rose and the jessamine
Still hang upon the wa':
How many cherished memories
Do thy sweet flowers reca'.

'Oh, the auld Laird, the auld Laird,
Sae canty, kind and crouse,
How many did he welcome to
His ain wee dear auld house!
And the leddy, too, sae genty,
There sheltered Scotland's heir,
And cleft a lock wi' her ain hand
Frae his lang yellow hair.

'The mavis still doth sweetly sing,
The blue-bells sweetly bla',
The bonnie Earn's clear winding still,
But the auld house is awa'.
The auld house, the auld house,
Deserted though ye be,
There ne'er can be a new house
Will seem sae fair to me.

'Still flourishing the auld pear tree
The bairnies liked to see;
And oh, how often did they speir
When ripe they a' would be!
The voices sweet, the wee bit feet
Aye rinnin' here and there,
The merry shout;—oh, whiles we greet,
To think we'll hear nae mair!

'For they are a' wide scattered now,
Some to the Indies gane,
And ane, alas! to her lang hame—
Not here we'll meet again.

The kirkyard, the kirkyard,
 Wi' flowers of every hue,
 Sheltered by the old holly's shade
 And the dark sombre yew.

'The setting sun, the setting sun
 How glorious it ga'd down !
 The cloudy splendour raised our hearts
 To cloudless skies aboon.
 The auld dial, the auld dial,
 It tauld how time did pass ;
 The wintry winds hae dung it doon,
 Now hid 'mang weeds and grass.'

Many years passed before, in sadder strains, an older, graver woman, but still a poetess, Lady Nairne, answered her own fanciful question as to the charm of renewed youth, positively, in the negative.

'Would you be young again ?
 So would not I.
 One tear to memory given,
 Onward I'd hie.
 Life's dark flood forded o'er,
 All but at rest on shore,
 Say would you plunge once more,
 With home so nigh ?'

And yet, for one who had been young amid those pleasant woods on the sunny banks of the Earn, for Carolina Oliphant, for the author of 'The Land o' the Leal,' 'Caller Herrin',' and many a stirring ballad, it might have seemed more natural to long to throw off the weight of years and to wish to be a child again in the old home !

After passing through that wild open country between the Ochil Hills and the Lower Grampians, over which the wind sweeps so freely by the ruined tower of 'Wallace Wight,' and the far more ancient runic stone, with its mysterious figures and cha-

racters (which ought to be better protected from the horns and hoofs of straying cattle), there is a singular charm in the waving woods of Gask, as well as in its velvet lawns and seemingly endless shrubby walks and grassy drives.

But the gentle poetess was of a somewhat melancholy temperament. Her religious aspirations all pointed 'Heavenward away'—they did not shed brightness on life's downward path.

'Night's gloomy watches fled,
Morning all beaming red,
Hope's smiles around us shed'—

referred, in her no longer sanguine mind, to realms where she might rejoin loved ones gone before, but failed to re-illumine the dim green woods and verdant alleys where her childish feet had strayed.

Her own wise words did not seem to apply to the change from youth to age and its often accompanying loneliness, or she might have said, as she sat again under her favourite rowan tree—

'Ilka state it has its blessings,
Peevish dinna pass them by,
But like choicest berries seek them,
Tho' amang the thorns they lie.'

That rowan tree—

'On whose fair stems were many names
Which now nae mair I see ;
But they're engraven on my heart,
Forgot they ne'er can be.'

Possibly her long engagement to her cousin may have given a tinge of the sadness of hope deferred to her youth ; and when she returned, after life in cities, to look upon scenes familiar to her in child-

hood, woods and waters, hill and moorland, it was with 'empty arms and treasure lost.'

Peace has come to her long ago. Peace which will not be disturbed by vain wishes, or by any words written after looking down upon her quiet resting-place under the deep shade of the funereal yews and ivied walls of the old family burial-ground, where she lies amid her nearest and dearest. On the site of the old Parish Kirk in the park at Gask, now stands amid the graves of her household an Episcopal chapel, built and endowed by herself and her nephew, with whom Lady Nairne came to reside, and to die, after a long troubled life.

Above that tomb, and the graves of others yet dear to survivors, may be heard at night the organ's rolling swell, and the voice of prayer and praise rises from one whose sweet lips can still smile, whose heart still beats warmly, and whose accents fall on the ear cheerily, though loneliness is her portion, and sorrows, deep and real as those of the poetess, have left her alone in the halls of Gask.

May there not be in such warm, living and loving charity a yet deeper meaning than lies in any wailing, persevering notes of woe? Are not good offices, kindly charities, friendly consideration, smiles for the young, caresses for children, ever more hallowing than penance and mortification? Do we not see yet more clearly the walk with God, when the eyes which take in all the beauties of His creation beam with serenity, when the cares of life are passed by unheeded, and the feet tread lightly the upward path leading to the mountains?

But all are not like-minded—some must wade

through, and even sink in seas of tribulation; whilst on the innocent childlike brows of othe descends a light not seen on sea or land. Though often bowed in woe, they lose not their first brightness. Who that looks upon that well-cared-for, lovely, old-fashioned flower-garden, with its straight grass walks and mossy steps worn by the footsteps of former generations, the peacocks on the trimly-cut bordering evergreens, and the green ivy wall, which alone remains of the old house—the ancient dial replaced on its pedestal—can doubt that a noble and kindly spirit bears rule where ‘The auld Laird’ once held sway?

Look across the river and the open prospect of the strath, or towards the Ochil Hills, and say, whether you gaze from the bonnie woods round the Hall, or the yet more modern mansion on the hill-side, where the next heir to the property resides—whether, even in these prosaic days, there is not still a spell of poetry and romance abiding with the old and new houses of Gask on the banks of the winding Earn?





THE OCHIL HILLS AND THE MASTERS OF GLENEAGLES.

'They had their lodges in the wilderness,
Or built their cells beside the shadowy sea,
And there they dwelt with angels, like a dream ;
So they unrolled the volume of the Book,
And filled the fields of the Evangelist
With antique thoughts that breathed of Paradise.'

R. S. Hawker, Rector of Morwenstow.



IN a deep cleft of the Ochil Hills, opening upon the moor of Tullibardine and the fertile strath watered by the Earn, with a burn wimpling on its swift course through fern and bracken, and an ancient Roman road cutting straight through the turf, there stands an old house called Gleneagles, which formerly belonged to the Haldanes. Close beside it are the graves of the household, with many another undistinguished sepulchre, resting peacefully under the ivied walls of a small chapel, and in that lone valley it is said that while rapine ruled the land the Gospel was preached in sincerity and truth. Many people still

call the brook 'Miss Haldane's Burn,' though it may own another name in authentic and authorised maps and records.

A great tranquillity pervades the scene. No road is visible from the many windows of the long, low, old house, excepting the narrow, shadowy avenue, a steep descent, by which it is approached, and which passes close to its walls. Beyond it there is a grand sweep of soft, green turf, with groups of dark old trees; the ancient chapel and burial-ground, with a distant view of grey moorland and massive boulders, past which the brook winds on its way.

And yet, though solitary, the place is not desolate. The upper rooms are spacious and numerous, and at the present time, well furnished, and supplied with books, and even luxuries. Everywhere the many windows command the same extensive, cool, green prospect, with one or two cottages here and there peeping through trees. It is said that an old dame, for whom a new home was provided by the present owner, resented so passionately any attempt at removal, that she is allowed to live and die in her own nest. One of the mistresses of the soil is also said to have been so passionately attached to the fine woods which once clothed the heights, that she caused the hillsides to be laid bare, when, on the failure of male heirs, it was impossible to prevent the estate passing away from the direct line. Like many another Scottish property, Gleneagles might have passed into the hands of complete strangers at an earlier date, had not Captain Robert Haldane, the first of his countrymen who ever commanded an East India Company's ship, acquired a fortune,

while his kinsman was spending one on electioneering expenses, and become the purchaser.

The great change occasioned by being called to attend Parliament in London, ruined many Scotch families ; but the sailor loved the old house of his family so well that he desired to be buried at Gleneagles ; though he lived principally at Airthrie, on account of the milder climate and the lovely view over the Carse of Stirling. His tomb is still shaded by majestic fir-trees, planted by his own hand, in front of the old chapel, near the ruins of the castle. He married a daughter of Sir John Oglander, of Nunwell ; and she, too, probably preferred the warmer situation of Airthrie, after leaving her home in the sunny and fertile Isle of Wight.

Ultimately, the lands of Gleneagles and Trinity Gask came into the possession of Admiral Viscount Duncan, the eldest surviving son of Helen Haldane, who married Alexander Duncan, of Lundie ; her sister and co-heiress, Mrs. Margaret Cockburn, having to bear the double sorrow of losing her own son and heir, and seeing Gleneagles, the place she so dearly loved, destined to pass at her death to the 'dark-haired boy,' who was not suffered, while she lived, to set foot on the land, or, after her death, to enjoy the shade of the woods.

It is not necessary here to speak of the brothers Robert and James Haldane, whose good deeds and unselfish conduct are recorded elsewhere, and well-remembered in Perthshire ; nor of their descendants who bear the famous old name, still common in Denmark, and borne from the Halden Hills in Devonshire, by a young scion of the house, to the

northern side of the border, where it has since mingled with many a baronial house.

Our business is with the stout Barons who lived in days of yore at Gleneagles. These were men after the fashion of their times, perhaps of all times, not wholly good, nor wholly bad, but with abundance of pith and sinew. Rugged they probably were as their own moorland paths, and the stems of the mighty firs planted by the old sea-captain, but bearing on their bold brows and in their honest breasts, the stamp of truth and faith; who, when the Gospel was first preached in that wild glen, under whose sod they have long been at rest, burst forth from their stronghold and drove the Packersmen who had been wont to carry on a stirring trade on Sabbath mornings, panting and breathless from their stalls, throwing down and scattering their lawless implements of traffic on the Lord's Day.

The spirit of the race survived transplantation, and led to sacrifices of land and gear for the sake of spreading Gospel truth. Memories attached to good and true men still hang about these green hills and flowing waters; though eagles may no longer, as of yore, poise on the wing above them. Men who did not sweep down into the fertile strath like birds of prey, but who upheld the faith, as it came down to them from their forefathers, and kept at peace in their own pleasant pastures, whether on the bonny slope of the Carse below Stirling towers, or among the ruder passes of the stern Ochil hills.





THE MASTERS OF GLENEAGLES.

H ! some went east and some went west,
 Across the salt sea foam,
 And others in an honest breast
 Kept the sweet faith of home.
 But all were manly, true and strong,
 Honoured in their degree ;
 Who learnt to suffer well and long,
 With heart and conscience free.

The short sweet turf springs green and fast
 On that straight Roman road,
 Whose hard and narrow course leads past,
 Each landmark stern and broad,
 Where Ochil hills rise bold and bare,
 Forming a mighty wall ;
 And eagles in the still, grey air,
 Wheeled round an ancient Hall.

It may be that, in days of yore,
 Their mighty wings were spread
 Above some battle-field of gore,
 Circling around the dead.
 When from the heights came martial men,
 In Highland garb arrayed,
 Who rushed like torrents down the glen
 Bent on some lawless raid.

But not for such unholy deeds
 Were Haldane's Barons known ;
 Under their sway no foeman bleeds,
 No curse is on them thrown ;

Good soldiers all and men of worth,
 Christians of high degree,
 Men of renown and ancient birth,
 They humbly bent the knee.

In better cause stood Haldane's lord,
 Firmly on his own land,
 Against the Sabbath-breaking horde
 Who scorn'd the Lord's command ;
 His honest sword flashed forth in wrath,
 He bade them clear the way,
 Nor bales nor packs should bar the path
 Upon that holy day.

From those old walls no martial strain
 Issues at eve or morn,
 But through the vale and o'er the plain
 The Gospel truth is borne.
 On yonder chapel's ivied walls,
 Circled by darkening pines,
 The light of Revelation falls,
 God's presence clearly shines.

And if no more the Eagle host
 Gather around that shrine,
 And no proud, human, empty boast
 Mocks that clear light divine ;
 A blessing rests upon the race
 Of Haldanes good and pure,
 With added force, though changed their place,
 And shall for aye endure.

The men who first the Gospel preached
In that wild, barren glen,
And far as England's empire reached
Bore that good gift to men ;
Shall still from sire to son abide
In the pure faith they spread ;
And reap the harvest, far and wide,
Sown by their mighty dead.





THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS AND CANNA IN THE SEA.

' A beacon gleamed o'er sea and land,
From Canna's tower, that, steep, and grey,
Like falcon-nest o'erhangs the bay.

* * * *

They tell, with Canna's chieftain came,
In ancient times, a foreign dame

To yonder turret grey ;

Stern was her lord's suspicious mind,
Who in so rude a jail confined

So soft and fair a thrall.

And oft when moon o'er ocean slept,
That lovely lady sate and wept

Upon the castle-wall.

And still when on the cliff and bay
Placid and pale the moonbeams play,

And every breeze is mute,

Upon the lone Hebridean's ear
Steals a strange pleasure mixed with fear,
While from that cliff he seems to hear

The murmur of a lute.'

The Lord of the Isles.



THOUGH even in the southern counties of England, thickly populated as they are in comparison with the wild moorland of Scotland, there lie, uncultivated still, acres upon acres, nay mile after mile, of blooming gorse and heather, over which purple-winged

butterflies and tiny moths, and insects of a thousand colours hover, sipping nectar—where, in September, gossamer veils are spread, and beautiful spiders flash in the misty sunlight—there is nothing to equal the crimson flush of the early heath which deepens into purple on the Highland hills, and is loveliest of all in the land of Lorne.

Watch the clouds on some still day of early autumn floating slowly above the moor, or reflected in the waters of a wide deep lake, or see them gather on the top of some lofty mountain as if imitating its outline, while the evening sky grows red with the first touch of frost on the atmosphere; or again, when the equinoctial gale blows fiercely and sweeps across the wild expanse; when the hills are veiled in mist, and cataracts thunder down the glens, where in summer a mere thread of water trickled over pebbles and between mossy boulders, leaving here and there pools of deep, clear, brown water, through which twinkled golden-hued stones and tender water-plants with bright yellow, starlike blossoms; and if you are a poet, or even an admirer of this beautiful world, you will own, though your garments are dripping with Scotch mist, and your feet imbedded in boggish land, that there is an enchantment in this—

‘Land of grey rock and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain and the flood,’

which does not hang about the richer landscapes of more southern climes.

How yonder belt of fir contrasts with the light green on the mountain side and the sapphire tint of the uplands! A glamour rests on the hills shining

through that purple veil, or melting into pale blue in the far distance. The mist flushes rosily and assumes yet more vivid colours as the season advances, hanging like rainbows on the hills and gleaming in the hollows, until on the top of those brightly-hued heights November places her first pale coronet of snow, and over the mossy carpet beneath steals the hoary network of the frost.

But let us not pass the boundaries of autumn. Suffer the leaves to drop one by one; the gorgeous scarlet and pale-gold of the chestnuts, the lemon-coloured limes, the warm russet-red of the oak; let the bramble and brier, red-berried, twine among the rocks, and the beautiful plumage of the cock-grouse peep through the withering leaves and bronzing ferns. Winter is only just coming up on the mountain-tops, we are not yet weary of the passing season.

Let us rather go back for a few brief moments to spring, and watch the bright gleams carried down through the dark moorland wherever some tiny burn freshened the turf, which we saw when we crossed the border; and the clumps of pine and fir where the larch was hanging out its tassels. May we not linger again awhile, where sunset gilds the peaks of the Eildon hills, and throws a flood of light on the noble river which flows past Dryburgh and Melrose!

Let us gather a few leaves, there are no flowers yet, in the silent grassy precincts where the great Magician of the North loved to sit and muse, weaving his mighty spells of fancy. Pass on to 'Mine own romantic town'—surely the most beau-

tiful of all capitals !—with its diadem of crags and its mountain heights, its grand old castle and palace, and princely streets and squares ; with the Braid and Pentland Hills, and varied sea and land prospects framing it in. That fair city so full of old romance and modern improvement, typified sufficiently by the walk along Princes Street to the Canongate. Who that has once trod the streets of ‘ Auld Reekie ’ and stood on the stone which marks where still beats the warm, genial heart of Mid-Lothian, has not longed to pass that way, at least once more, in life, again.

But it is ‘ a far cry to Lock Awe,’ and we want to get back there, and look upon the face of the great, cold, fresh-water lake under Ben Cruachan. There is a little island set in its waters which has a sad charm of its own, especially if it is visited in very early summer-time, when sheets of blue hyacinths shimmer like a cloud over the earth, hiding the grass and perfuming the air, not the real Blue-bells of Scotland—they come later and linger with us through the autumn—but the fair sisterhood which, in England, are companions of the primrose and anemone in the spring woods, but come into bloom later in the North ; or stay, let us watch yonder boat floating slowly along followed by light skiffs. It is a funeral procession bringing the dead from the mainland, over the water, to the burial-ground at Inishail.

Not many years ago in that ice-cold lake a young and beautiful English girl was drowned, while those who loved her passionately stood on the shore unable to render efficient help. To me her image haunts

Loch Awe, and her slight, graceful form rises to view heralded, in fancy, by the weird Highland dirge which used to accompany the passage of the death-boat across the lake.

These lesser heights that girdle Ben Cruachan, 'The Etive Shepherds' often seem in the calm September days to be watching imaginary flocks of sheep, while the great mountain lifts its bald storm-washed face high above them, overlooking many a frowning steep and crag. Let us leave them with pale, silvery gleams upon their stern brows, and on the sister lake (Loch Etive), against whose shore the tides beat faintly, and pass on to the misty Islands of the West.

As one whose venturous spirit led him into the very worst turmoil of the tempestuous seas which girdle the outer Hebrides, farther and faster than we can follow, has said, few pass beyond the outworks of these giants. 'The chilly Cuchullins' make the holiday tourist shiver. 'The great headlands from Stornoway to Barra, dark, ever lonely in mist, warning off all fair weather wanderers. Pencilled in faint and ghastly peaks; hued like the heron's breast, peeping between craggy Rum and Eig, loom in shadow the Cuchullins, or Coolin hills of Skye: forbidding in their stern beauty, isolated and sea-surrounded, they possess no superficial fascinations; their power is one that grows, their spell is that of the glamour holding only the divinely-selected soul.'

It must have been to one thus gifted that nature revealed herself in yet more glowing colours and varied forms among the conical red hills and grey

mountains of Skye, flushed with the sunset and flooded by the stormy lights which illumine at times even these gloomy fastnesses. Listen to a true poet's rapt recollection of the mighty monarch which towers with sharp grey front and sides, rent and gored by cataracts, over the dark bed of ocean against the stormy sky :

'Oh wonderful mountain of Blaven !
 How oft since our parting hour
 You have roared with the winter torrents
 You have gloomed through the thunder shower !
 Oh Blaven ! rocky Blaven !
 How I long to be with you again,
 To see lashed gulf and eddy
 Smoke white in the windy rain—
 To see in the scarlet sunrise
 The mist wreaths perish with heat ;
 The wet rock slide with a trickling gleam
 Right down to the cataract's feet.
 While toward the crimson islands,
 Where the sea-birds flutter and skirl,
 A cormorant flaps o'er a dark ocean floor
 Of tremulous mother-of-pearl.'

Alexander Smith.

Set in the midst of those turbulent waters which separate the Western Isles from the Outer Hebrides, lies a small island, seldom visited, alone amid stormy seas ; which yet at times glows with the brightest tints of spring and summer.

'The cuckoo cries out from the thicket
 That spring in her gladness is there.'

From every bush and brake the bird whose note is so familiar to English ears seems pouring out a welcome to the traveller ; and this year there have been more visitors than usual to these solitary isles. In the hot evenings of summer the corncrake's

harsh note is borne on the breeze, just as it sounds in many an English home landscape. The valleys are set thick with waving grain, and grass grows green upon the hills. The shepherds call their flocks, round which the sagacious dogs run, barking joyously, and lambs bleat in sheltered homesteads, when the early spring awakes upon the uplands.

But when the flood-gates are unloosed and boiling tides beat against Canna's coast, all is changed. The voice of the storm rises into a roar, and the for ever beating pulse of the waves into a boom like artillery. Around the lonely tower is said to flit the spirit of the frail woman who was left to die there in solitude; wailing, as she did in life, for steps that never came back.

Another woman, a daughter of this sea-girt isle, went forth, as women will do at all hazards, across the seas, and returned, as is also often the fate of her sex, broken-hearted and forsaken. Around her tradition has woven a touching legend, which we have tried to set to the wild music of the winds and waves, throbbing incessantly against the rocky shores of Canna's lonely isle.

To Mr. Buchanan's eloquent prose version of this touching story we must again acknowledge our obligations for the details given in the following poem.



CANNA IN THE SEA.

A LEGEND OF THE WESTERN ISLES.

O you hear the great sea, wailing,
 Cry at the outer door ?
 Wind and wave at once assailing
 The lone house on the shore ?
 ' That child is for ever weeping !

What ails the little maid ?
 Our brave islanders are sleeping,
 Why need she be afraid ?
 But the mother rocked her child,
 And soothed it with a sigh ;
 When the winds were loud and wild,
 And the waves rolled sounding by.

So the little maid grew older
 In that weird, unquiet place,
 And the little feet grew bolder,
 Though white the little face.

And still the sea came creeping
 Up to the very door ;
 And the wind kept up its weeping
 O'er the lone house by the shore.

But the summer breeze blew lightly,
 And corn waved on the lea,
 And the moon and stars shone brightly
 On Canna in the sea.

Yet still, through the murmuring grey stones
 The white water, as it rose,
 Cried out : ' Give up your dear ones
 When the next tide ebbs and flows,'

Then the mother's heart ached sore,
 And she laid her down to die,
 While those voices on the shelving shore
 Went sadly sounding by.

Five brothers, reckless, stout, and tall,
 Manned their old father's boat,
 They feared not blinding mist or squall,
 Nor the wild tempest's note :

When round those dangerous headlands
 Shrieked the fierce water-sprite,
 And over Canna's wide-stretched strands
 Brooded the black-winged night.

Nought cared they for the dreary knell
 Upon that mist-veiled shore,
 With which the ocean's mighty swell
 Broke at their very door.

'The sparkling herrings' silvery freight,
 By Scavaig's salt-waved lake,
 Bids them be quick, nor fear, nor wait,
 That precious shoal to take.

They heeded not their sister's plaint,
 Her dreams, foreboding woe,
 No Canna youth must shirk or faint,
 Though wild the night winds blow.

Though the water came up, crying,
 To the threshold of the door,
 And the wind in turn replying
 Rocked the lone house on the shore.

‘ Give up your strong, your dear ones,
 Yes, give them all to me !’
 Said a voice from out those cold grey stones
 Beside the restless sea.

And still that voice so dreary,
 Oft sounds along our shore,
 While the women watch and weary
 For those who come no more.

The father’s face grew still and white,
 His heart cold as a stone,
 As he stood from noon till black midnight,
 Upon that cliff alone.

There, where the eagle built his nest,
 Whence last his boat was seen,
 They found him, stiff, stretched out, at rest,
 Wrapped in his plaided screen.

Years passed—and Love found entrance
 Within the close-barred door ;
 Through lattice-panes the orphan’s glance
 Fell on the wave-washed shore.

The stranger wiled her with his books,
 Full of quaint legends old ;
 And still more with his winning looks,
 His manners, frank and bold.

Yet still the waves came crying
 Up to her very door ;
 And the wind kept up its sighing,
 And moaned along the shore.

She crossed the seas that gird our isle,
 She crossed them, nothing loth,
 With him whose sunny southern smile
 Had won her plighted troth.

She aided him with heart and hand
 To build a second home,
 Far in the stranger's distant land
 Across the salt sea foam.

But men are hard, and false, and foul,
 Those strangers on our strand !
 Her true love palled upon his soul—
 He struck her with his hand.

He left her in that unknown clime—
 He never came again—
 For some light love, or darker crime,
 Guilt of yet deeper stain.

And then the woman's heart turned back
 Across the salt sea foam ;
 And o'er the great sea's silent track
 She sought her early home.

For the wild waters called once more,
 The winds sighed : ' Oh return,
 To where upon our lonely shore
 The lights of Canna burn !'

Gold had she in her kist : a store
 Gathered with toil and pain ;
 That might have opened many a door
 To the child come home again.

But the old house had fallen down,
Window and door stood wide ;
The roof by wandering winds was blown
Far o'er the ocean tide.

And that warm heart, which ached to hear
It's childhood's song once more,
Broke, when at last that morning drear
Dawned upon Canna's shore.

Do you hear the great sea, wailing,
Cry at the outer door ?
Wind and wave at last prevailing
O'er the wrecked house by the shore.





CALLANDER CRAGS.

IN THE WARM DISTRICT.

'Twere long to tell what steeds gave o'er,
As swept the hunt through Cambusmore ;
What reins were tightened in despair,
When rose Ben-Ledi's ridge in air ;
Who flagged upon Bochastle's heath,
Who shunned to stem the flooded Teith,—
For twice, that day, from shore to shore,
The gallant stag swam stoutly o'er.
Few were the stragglers, following far,
That reached the lake of Vennachar.'



WONDER how many of the numerous sportsmen and tourists who rushed through Callander during the summer and autumn, or may have spent a night or two in the little town divided by the swiftly-flowing Teith, have cast a thought upon it since ?

Some passing comment must have been excited and bestowed upon its exceeding beauty of situation when they

'Reached that torrent's sounding shore
Which, daughter of three mighty lakes,
From Vennachar in silver breaks

Sweeps through the plains, and ceaseless mines
On Bochart the mouldering lines
Where Rome, the Empress of the World,
Of yore her eagle wings unfurled.'

Most of these travellers, however, were on their way to fresh hunting grounds, or longing to revisit scenes of past exploits; some were pushing on to the farther Western Highlands, and to islands set like Canna in the misty ocean, grey mountains, ashen-faced like the Cuchullins of Skye, and stormy seas, which stir the Vikings' blood now, as of yore, when Hakon and his wild followers fought and died for the possession of those wind-swept shores.

But some of the wanderers did look again and again, and even stayed their flight at Callander, and have remained spell-bound in that quiet spot ever since the busy time when the Dreadnought Hotel, which has a Highland chieftain's motto for its ensign, lodged, on the night before the 12th of August, 1881, seventy human beings! Have these few lingerers repented? No! a thousand times no! Though storm after storm has swept across, and rain floods descended on the plain; though the sapphire-tinted mountains are hooded with snow—though the swollen waters hurry down from Loch Lubnaig and the three beautiful sister lakes, Katrine, Achray, and Vennachar, and swell the river to overflowing, as it receives the united streams which meet close to Callander Bridge, and then hastens to join the more sluggish Forth—they have never repented of the impulse, hasty as it might be, which checked their course.

Circumstances, important only to themselves, had

cut the knot which bound them to their home in a sunny, south-western English county. Freedom had been restrained by a sudden mania for building over and enclosing heath land, previously wild as Highland hills; fierce conflagrations had burnt up the pride of the gorse and heather; in vain had they looked nearer home, as many kind friends advised, for a place in which to pitch their tent, without finding a lodge in the wilderness to suit them. Scotland, their mother's native land, with her moors and mountains, twinkling burns and rushing rivers, seemed to open her kindly arms amid storm and sunshine. Edinburgh offered many attractions, but they were country-born and bred, and cared not for town life—so they wended their way first to Loch Lomond, the queen of Scottish lakes; and then, after a pleasant halt, to Stirling rock and town and Allan Brigg, past all the wild district of Menteith to the village-town, nestling under its own sheltering crags, at the entrance of the Pass of Leny.

A Scotch mist thickened into rain—as it has done many a time since—the first evening of their arrival; then on the following day—as it often does at a moment's notice—the sun shone out, the vapours rolled away, Ben-Ledi shook the clouds from her brow, Loch Lubnaig smiled a welcome, Dunmore's craggy ridge flushed crimson, the Calhalletm woods rustled, the Leny water dimpled and whispered; the more distant peaks, as they became visible in the afternoon light, glowed with an irresistible glamour, the waving birch trees and nodding fox-gloves, the bluebells and wild roses of Scotland

bowed themselves in greeting, or twined themselves into joyous wreaths—all seemed inviting them to remain, and to say, ‘Here is your home,’ and their sweet voices were obeyed.

Where indeed could a place be found possessing so many advantages? Set in the midst of highly romantic scenery, full of historic and poetical associations, and yet easy of access, homelike and peaceful, with excellent roads leading into the wild fastnesses of Nature’s sanctuary, wood and moorland, rocky glen and foaming cataract. Lodgings of all sizes and degrees abound, and are, considering the brevity of the season, not immoderate in price. At either end of the village are railway stations, and there are three postal deliveries daily throughout the year; an admirably conducted hotel, where even our Queen, fastidious on that point, was satisfied with the horses provided during her stay at Invertrossachs House; good shops and tolerably moderate prices even during the four gay months when the place swarms with visitors. At the west-end of the village, set in the midst of the Leny and Willoughby Feus, pretty detached villas, with trim patches of garden ground neatly kept around each, stand the Episcopal Church and Vicarage, where the services are admirably conducted, and there is a choir of remarkable excellence, chiefly indebted to the beautiful voices and musical skill of the Vicar’s daughters, aided during the season by practised volunteers from Edinburgh and other large towns. In an oddly shaped opening called the Square, shaded by very old trees, stand the Church and School of the establishment, and nearer to the river

down a wide, very picturesque street, the Free Kirk.

The town itself, composed of buildings of all sorts and descriptions, runs in one long irregular line from east to west. Backed by the wooded crags, where bristling pines and larch alternate with other verdure, which in autumn assumes the most brilliant hues, the vista terminates with the grand graceful curves of Ben-Ledi, and the dark rough craggy outline of Dunmore. White-walled cottages, some ancient and only of one story, stand side by side with tall houses of more pretension. Grey and russet mingle with brown walls, and the sunlight glints on the high projecting storm-windows. Through the green meadows meander the various streams which converge to form the Teith, and towers and roofs rise above the picturesque bridge of three arches which spans the river. There is a wonderful combination and contrast of colour and form which affords ample scope for the genius of a first-rate artist. A tree-crowned ridge, called the Camp, and said to be Roman, but more resembling early British lines of fortification, leads away to fields by the river, through which it takes its south-eastward course; a still more curious mound with a flagstaff on the top called Tomachassaig, bears traces of serpent-worship; and there are still, or have been very recently, games played by the boys of Callander, which carry the mind back to a dark, perhaps fabulous, period of history and idolatry.

Only a rocky fragment remains of the old Castle of Callander, where now stands the manse belonging to the established Church of Scotland; and,

near it, an old tree-shadowed mansion. Under its high walls winds a very wild beautiful road over the moors which, in one direction, branches off towards Lake Menteith and Aberfoyle, Rob Roy's country, and in the other passes the junction of the Teith and Keltie and the woods of Cambusmore, leading to the ancient Castle and town of Doune. Bridle roads and pathways diverge from it to moorland farms, over rough bridges and through marshy heath and turf. Masses of fern and wild flowers flourish in all directions, and a grand panorama of mountains girds the wild scenery on all sides.

Beyond the Bracklinn Falls ascends a regular mountain road, crossed in summer by streamlets, in winter by torrents, which affords splendid views of the mountains near Loch Lubnaig, Ben-Voirlich, Ben-More, wave upon wave of undulating ranges, while on the right hand the moor shapes itself into 'the wild heights of Uam Var.' Here peep out the first tufts of crimson heath, and beautiful marsh plants grow in the running water. Through beds of gorse and heather a steep path winds up to the Crag; and in the opposite direction pleasant lanes passing lonely farms and cottages will bring the wanderer to the Stirling road near Cambusmore House, where Sir Walter Scott is said to have written, and certainly stored the material for many a tale and lay, especially 'The Lady of the Lake.' In boyhood he spent some time among the Perthshire Highlands; and often returned there, finding subjects for thought and fancy in the haunts of the bold outlaw, and in the beautiful districts where every detail of the chase which he has so vividly

described may be traced, when the sound of the old names brings it back to the mind.

The falls of Bracklinn, described in 'Waverley,' rush down through the variegated woods in autumn with tremendous force when swollen by recent rains. It is to be desired that an easier mode of approach should be made to a place so famed in story; as though the bridge itself is less perilous than when Flora M'Ivor and her attendant crossed the narrow plank, the way to it is tedious and difficult, encumbered with rough stones, slippery, and standing in pools and streams of water, which add nothing to its romantic beauty, and threaten the careless or enthusiastic visitor who stoops to gather one of the many wild-flowers, or to survey the landscape, with immersion in the bog.

Those who remember Callander in the olden time, as it must have looked when the village nestled compactly on each side of the Teith, its white-walled cottages rising above the grey-arched bridge with no obtrusive modern houses hiding the fair prospect, may have a right to murmur at innovations; but for our strangers the pretty villas at the West End are principally suggestive of more comfortable accommodation than could be afforded by the small low houses in the main street.

You are soon free of all impediments, except the picturesque farm-buildings, cottages, and factory-mill at Kilmahog; looking down on the marshy lands of Bochastle, and, upward, on the mountain side, at Samson's putting-stone, and you can either pursue the winding open road towards the Trossachs or cross Garchonzie Bridge. Linger awhile and look

over its steep grey parapet upon the rushing river, for you are not far from 'Clan Alpine's outmost guard,' and 'Coilantogle's ford' is but at a short distance. Watch the drooping branches and hear the sigh of the current as it sweeps through them. In autumn the scarlet rowan-berries glow in sunshine against the brown leaves and dark boulders. It is a delightful walk back to Callander, past yonder groups of tall fir trees and ruined cottages, with the stream gliding swiftly through brier and bramble, and at intervals varying views of Ben-Ledi, 'The Mountain of God,' and its attendant lower ridge, Dunmore, breaking through woodland boughs. Or you may walk on after crossing Garchonzie Bridge to Loch Vennachar, still as silvery as in Scott's time, which derives its name from 'a fair plain.' Skirting the lovely lake, with its smooth sands and overhanging trees, some of which grow in the water, you arrive at the ever open gates of Invertrossachs House and grounds, whence lovely views of Ben Venue across the water meet you at every step.

But if the shadowy road and cool gushing rivulets tempt you, instead of crossing the bridge at Kilmahog, to wander on towards the Pass of Leny, do not resist their overtures; and should, as was the case with our wanderers, the gates of a pretty cottage at Wood-End be courteously opened, by all means enter, and watch the wild, weird gladsome play of the Leny water, rushing past wooded banks hung with wild roses and dashing over all impediments as they hurry down to the plain. Not heeding the great rock that tries to bar the way,

they fling themselves over its base and circle round it in foaming whirls. Amidst the lighter foliage rise, in mid-stream, islets, copse-covered, with here and there dark fir trees relieved against the white waters. The bonnie red Scotch wild rose twines everywhere, mingled with another species, pure white but tipped at the end of the petals with crimson, among deep beds of heather and fern.

For the present our pedestrians do not care to go farther away from Callander, otherwise they might pursue the routes last mentioned to the Trossachs or Loch-Earn-Head. Those who rush wildly about, and by aid of steam fly past wood, and rock, and river, never feel those sweetest hidden influences, never realise the hallowed emotions which those who love to look well and long, and linger, derive from studying every point of view, past which trains dash at full speed.

See, on the mountain tops, the autumnal clouds gather, deepen and disperse rapidly as they do in hilly districts. Watch the mists float, at eve or early morn, across Ben-Ledi, now veiling its gracefully curved summit, now hanging on its skirts, or cutting it across sharply. Now they are gone, and our stately lady stands clearly outlined against the sky. Surely she has a most graceful form—like a fair woman's shape, with the curves which make perfect beauty! Ben-Lomond is grander, but not so graceful. He rests, like a giant in his strength, on his mighty shoulders. Ben-Ledi bends and smiles like a queen.

This benign lady of the hills extends her kind arms round 'the warm district,' sheltering it from

storms. Very seldom is thunder heard, or lightning seen flashing over Callander. Nestling under mountain and crags, the village sustained no damage from the fierce hurricanes which lately devastated Western Scotland.

It is true hers are weeping skies. Showers descend in pearly dews which thicken into deluges of rain frequently; but, after a while, sunbeams break through the mist and moisture with Doré-like brightness, and flash into rainbows against the heavily-laden clouds. Woes and wailing are soon forgotten, as speedily as the flinty mountain roads and pathways become dry.

And now, though trains still rush past, Callander is very quiet. The swarm of tourists are all gone, and are not greatly missed. Snow has fallen on the mountains, veiling them from base to summit. The shadows cast upon them, instead of the sapphire hue of summer, are pale blue, with vivid sunlight on their massive snow-clad brows. The frost is hanging its icicles on the waterfall in Leny Glen, and every flower has perished in the biting cold.

So be it. Summer cannot always be with us, and a weight heavier far than snow has fallen on the village. Those who basked in the August sunshine must look back to the time when they walked beside the river with one who noticed every shade on the mountains, each glancing light on vale and stream. Ardent prayers went up to Heaven for the preservation of his valued life, and a long life *was* given to him, 'even for ever and ever,' but on this earth, when the woods are rejoicing and the glad waters

let loose, his springy step and clear voice will be no more heard.

As he said at the last, he has kept the faith, his course is finished; and he is where the weary are at rest. When he walked beside our travellers by the river, he said that he had composed a hymn, which had been set to music, and which would be sung on Advent Sunday by the choir of his own Church, but ere that day his voice was hushed, the songs of his beloved ones were silenced, and before that solemn tide was half-way passed through, the mourners went about the streets. When hope prevailed, and prayers went up from all the churches and many households on that stormy Advent Sunday, one of his small flock, one of the strangers who walked with him on Teith bank, and to whom he had been since their arrival most kind, making them near and dear friends, thought the thoughts and embodied them in the verses with which this sketch must conclude.

Above the flooded river's course,
Full to the very brim,
Above the wild wind's mighty force
I hear thy Advent hymn;
Just as I heard it on the path
Beside the Teith's swift stream,
Before the tempest's howling wrath
Had spoiled our summer dream.

Oh, shepherd, good, and brave, and kind,
Manly, devout and true,
Of open hand, and cultured mind,
And broad expansive view ;

Where shall we find thy like again,
Warm friend and steady guide ?
Leading thy flock across the plain
Far up the mountain side.

Amid the gush of wind and sleet
That strain flows softly past ;
Soothingly sad, gentle and sweet,
Heard through the fitful blast ;
Then peals triumphant as the shout
Of the loud thunder's roar,
Or as when Sabbath bells ring out
O'er river, wood, and shore.

Oh, once, a softer chime was rung
By our loved Pastor's hand,
When our one bell its summons flung
Over the slumbering land ;
When, deep in snow, the shepherd stood
Striving his flock to guide
Into the open House of God
Last All-Saints' holy-tide.

But drifting frost-fog's icy breath
Lulled us to dull repose,
As sinks the traveller, numbed to death,
Amid the Alpine snows ;
Oh, had we known how soon the hand
That beckoned would be stayed
In weakness fast—how soon, unmanned,
The tall form prostrate laid !

Night after night fresh gusts sweep past,
Hurled from the mountain's brow,
Our Advent hymns rise up at last,
Mournful, subdued, and low ;

We pray for mercy, pardon, peace,
For life, for health, we pray,
For him whose offerings did not cease
From childhood to mid-day.

In this dark night of dread and woe,
Oh, Father, hear and aid !
While round our Church wild tempests blow,
And floods our banks invade ;
When round Ben-Ledi's storm-capped brow
Fiercely the night-winds sweep,
And trembling hearts beat faint and slow,
And wife and children weep.

Above thy couch of weakness rise
United prayers—one call
From every Church and household cries
For him who loved us all.
Let not our Christmas joys be chilled,
Our votive offerings dim,
By tears be stained—may all instilled
With rapture raise thy hymn.





THE LARK'S MATINS.

A TRUE STORY.



HIGH in the heavens, from her lowly nest,
The lark springs up in the dewy dawn,
With her morning psalm in her throbbing
breast,
And pours it out on the ear of morn :
Thrilling sweet cadences, strong and
clear,
Fit offering of praise to her Maker's ear.

‘ Morn after morn I have come to the shore,
Drawing my nets in the dawning cold,
That the first school of herrings be landed before
The cruel dog-fish rushes into their fold :
Yet never once have I raised my voice
In prayer or praise—to give thanks or rejoice.’

As the sun leaps up from his watery bed
Over the hills in the glowing morn,
The fisherman bends his hoary head
The very first time since he was born :

No trills, no cadence fill his deep throat,
But heart-wrung sighs are in every note.

‘It must be instinct—it cannot be thought—
That taught the bird its sweet song to raise,
As higher and higher it soared aloft,
Then sank back to its rest in the reedy maze :
Never again in the early dawn,
Without prayer and praise shall my nets be
drawn.’

